NEW ZEALAND NEW WRITING

Edited by IAN A. GORDON

Contributors :

ALAN FALCONER
WALLACE GAITLAND
R. GILBERD
G. R. GILBERT
JAMES HARRIS
MARION HOPE
JOHN MALE
DON McDONALD
RONALD L. MEEK
E. O. PETERSEN
P. W. ROBERTSON
FRANK SARGESON
KENDRICK SMITHYMAN
GREVILLE TEXIDOR
ANTON VOGT
M. T. WOOLASTON

A TIKI BOOK

NEW ZEALAND NEW WRITING

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NUMBER THREE

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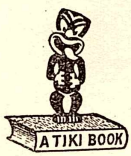
IAN A. GORDON



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Foreword

WITH THE publication of this number New Zealand New Writing can fairly claim to be established. All contributions are now paid for and, so long as our readers support the venture as they have the first numbers, will continue to be paid for. The editor is particularly grateful to the contributors to numbers one and two, who by the generous gift of their labours made initial publication possible. All contributions for later issues, which should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope if their return is required, should be sent to The Editor, New Zealand New Writing, P.O. Box 956, Wellington.

A chapter from an unpublished novel

The News

WALLACE GAITLAND

NEARLY SEVEN MONTHS after John's first visit to the doctor, he received word from the hospital board, advising him of a vacancy at Waipiata. The letter stated that if he wished to enter the institution, he must notify them immediately and be prepared to arrive there within a few days. It was impossible to hold a bed, they explained, as there were eighty tubercular cases on their waiting list.

The message came to John as an unpleasant shock. He had visited the office of the board at the beginning of each month, and always had been told: "We'll soon have you there. We'll soon be knocking at the door."

Month after month had passed in this manner, with the old gentleman soon having him there and soon knocking at the door, until he had actually begun to think that he would never get there, that he would be cured before a bed was ready. And this opinion was encouraged by the words of his own doctor. Every Monday John was examined, and after each examination he was told that he was doing well and had nothing to worry about. "Keep on as you're going and we'll soon have you back at the 'varsity."

This then had all been bluff. "Eyewash," John told himself, "Eyewash to keep my pecker up. I'll go and see the doctor immediately." And he did.

The doctor told him to be patient and that Rome wasn't built in a day. "You *have* been doing well. But it takes time . . . takes time. And you've got to remember this: you might feel perfectly well for a day or so, or even quite a while, then you do a little too much, and back you go. Or it might be just a

change in the weather. You catch a chill. Up goes your temperature. Back to bed. Oh no, you can't afford to take a chance. Even when the disease is arrested you'll still have to be careful. In fact, you'll have to be careful for at least three years after your discharge from the sanatorium. And there have been cases of a relapse during anything up to twenty years. Mind you, there's nothing to worry about . . . so long as you look after yourself. And as I said before, you are doing well, but I still think the sanatorium's the place. Go there by all means, and as soon as you can. The sooner you're there, the sooner you're out."

"I can't see it," John said. "If I'm doing well, why not carry on as I'm doing? I can look after myself."

The doctor smiled. "You're very hard to convince. You must remember that the weather has been exceptional, even for this time of the year. It's not often we get such a long spell of dry weather. And a good summer is usually followed by half a dozen bad ones. Also, we'll have the winter on us in a couple of months—that means rain and wind and more rain and more wind, and there's always a damp cold. The weather's different at Waipiata. It's cold, colder than here, but a healthy cold . . . high and dry with plenty of frost, and sun afterwards. That's the sort of climate *you* need.

"Besides, you'll get injections, and they build up your resistance. That's your main trouble."

He pulled the skin on John's arm. "See—you're not the tough sort. Your skin betrays you. No. You get that idea out of your head and get right up to Waipiata as soon as you can."

He looked at John and laughed. "Don't pull such a long face. Damn it all, you're not dead yet. And come and see me when you're discharged. I'll bet your opinions will have changed."

So that was that. And now—Margaret would have to be told.

. . . .

Shortly after tea, John wheeled out his bicycle and rode slowly in the direction of the farm, encouraging himself in this manner: "She loves me. So it shouldn't make any difference. She might be annoyed at first, but in the end it shouldn't make any difference."

But there was no strength in his limbs, and when he saw her coming towards him on her own bicycle he trembled; and this in spite of the fact that her presence here would relieve him of the necessity of calling at the farm. He did not want her parents to know. For he realized that parents could be interfering, and that he was not in a position to offer any substantial argument in his own favour.

So far as his own parents were concerned, John had never spoken of Margaret, nor so much as hinted that he was in love. His parents had been given to understand that he had developed a fondness for bicycle rides—which was true in part, and therefore not really a deception—and they had shown so little interest that he had been disappointed; although, had they questioned him, he would have told them nothing, and would have regarded their action as interference. Later on he might tell them. But he was not sure. For there was an air of mystery about the clandestine. Also, his mother was not free from snobbishness; and his father—well, his father *was* fond of money.

As Margaret approached, he saw that she was flushed. The colour in her cheeks was too pronounced, and her eyes were cloudy. Her lips moved in a smile, but there was no animation. No flash of pleasure. He was hurt from the beginning. And he was hurt more when she spoke, for her voice came out loud and shrill—as it always did when she was annoyed—and the slovenliness of her speech was accentuated.

"What cha doing here?" As though he had no right to be there! "I was jist on me way t' see some friends. I can't see y' now. I can't stop. I'm late."

Her abruptness jarred him. For one quick moment he thought: "You common thing." And he saw her in middle age: fat, blowsy, coarse. Then he remembered—this might be the end. And now he perceived only the mystery of her and the extent of his need.

"It's important," he said, "frightfully important, or I wouldn't have come."

"What's important?"

"What—what I want to tell you."

She looked at him dubiously. "All right. Tell me."

"I can't . . . here."

Her eyebrows lifted. "Why?"

"It's too—too serious. Let's go somewhere. I want to be sure we're alone."

"We're alone now."

"Yes. But people might pass."

She gave him a sharp look. "Why all the mystery?"

"Please," he said. "Do let's go to Bungalow One. It's only a couple of minutes or so from here. And I won't keep you a moment. But I do want us to be alone. It's awfully important."

She appeared to be on the verge of sulking. He looked at her intently, trying to hold her glance, trying to read her thoughts, to influence them.

She flushed again under his gaze. Her eyes became smaller, appearing to shrink behind the fluttering lashes.

"All right then." And she finished sharply. "Come on."

. . . .

Bungalow One was near the river. Margaret had a number of favourite nooks within a mile or so of the farm. She would take John to these, pointing them out with pride. And she would say: "Don't y' think it's a lovely little possey? We used t' roast eggs here when I was a kid." Or again: "D'y like this one? I only jist found it a year ago."

She called them bungalows because "I'd jist love t' live in one 'n' this is as far as I've got—calling a place a bungalow."

He suggested that they should identify them by numbers, and she had been pleased with the idea, and from that time they had spoken of them as "Bungalow One," "Bungalow Two," and so on.

All these places could be reached without going near the farm: a fact that would enable Margaret to keep the knowledge of their acquaintance from her parents. John could think of no reason for her doing so, but he concluded that—as she never invited him to call—she did not wish him to meet her people.

And he preferred it this way. For he was afraid that if she did ask him to call, she would in turn expect to meet his own parents; and it was too soon—much too soon for that. No. It was better for all concerned to leave everything as it was.

. . . .

It took them only a few minutes to reach the river. They dismounted on the far side of the bridge, concealed their bicycles, and walked through a stretch of flax and tussock. The ground was soft in places, receding to their feet. John could feel the dampness of the air near the water. Margaret was not wearing stockings, and the flax swished against her legs.

When they came to a high ridge of sand she scrambled up like a monkey, but John plugged away and was breathless when he reached the top.

Margaret took off her shoes and began to shake them. "One thing," she said. "Sand isn't wot y'd call dirty. It's sort of clean."

"Isn't it heavy?" John said, allowing a handful to slide through his fingers. He spoke of the first thing that came into his mind, for he wanted to keep her from asking questions until they reached the Bungalow, and he wanted to recover his breath before continuing.

From where they sat, he could see Bungalow One,

a group of tall shrubs that stood alone, as though aloof, near a large patch of bush that overran the hollow.

"What a lot of shiny bits," Margaret said. "Jist like tiny pieces of glass."

"Yes." He answered, observing the arch of her foot as she replaced it in the shoe. The sinuousness of her movement was tantalizing, the outline of her body provocative. He felt an impulse to touch her body, to taste, to possess and be possessed. He felt a longing to fuse himself with her, for them to become as one, and to remain like that for eternity.

Suddenly she spoke. "Tell me now. It'll be dark soon, I'll have t' go."

Her abruptness jarred him. It was as though she perceived his desire and were rejecting it. He flashed her a look of hatred. Then he remembered what desire had caused him to forget. But he could not explain here—on this ridge. It must be somewhere —somewhere that was enclosed.

The Bungalow was only a hundred yards away, but Margaret was rising, shaking her skirt. "Hurry up," she said. "I'll have t' go. I'm late now."

He looked at her but his brain refused to work. He looked away, his eyes following the road, which curved outward from the bridge, a smooth band pressed into a ragged landscape. It disappeared every now and then, submerged by mounds that were tufted with flax and trees : trees that were stunted and leaning over, their foliage issuing like abrupt smoke from leaky funnels. He saw the gaps of sand that showed on the corrugations, that showed among the lupins, the toi-tois, and the marram grass, and were like worn patches on the flank of a recumbent monster. He saw the road emerge finally, a thick-pencilled line, drawn to the base of a dune that fronted the long beach and the breakers.

All this he saw clearly, in the space of a few seconds. Concerning this his brain was active; to all else it was numb.

Margaret spoke again. He scrambled to his feet, caught her by the wrist, and pulled her down the other side.

"You're not going," he said. "Not till I've told you . . . I've got T.B. I've got to go to the San."

There now—it was out. All those rehearsed, elegant periods forgotten. How many times had he composed phrases, arguments, whole speeches for this occasion? How many times had he vizualized himself explaining with dignity and restraint. And this was how it happened.

What would she say? Why didn't she speak? She merely sat on the sloping ground, clasping her knees and looking—looking as though he were not there.

He began to tremble. Then he saw a different expression on her face. She appeared to be studying him; to be digesting, weighing, summing him up with a cold precision.

"Margaret!"

Her lashes flickered. "How long have y' known?"

He reached out and caught her fingers. She was always so cool to touch. So firm. And yet so resilient. So restful . . . And yet so stimulating.

He entwined his fingers in hers and could feel a current uniting them.

"It was only this morning," he said. "I had a letter from the Hospital Board and I went to the doctor and he told me that I ought to go. Before then I knew that I might go. But I didn't know for certain. And I honestly thought it would only be a matter of time—a few months at most—and I'd be cured. I couldn't realize I had T.B. I couldn't believe I did have it. Why should I? Look at my father—" He was forgetting that she had not met his father. "Look at him . . . how strong he is. And I've never had a haemorrhage. And the doctors say we've all got the germ in us—or something like that. And my own doctor said that I had it only slightly. So why should I have to go? I can't see it. I just

can't see the necessity. Honestly, I don't feel really ill—I never have since I met you.

"Margaret—"

She withdrew her fingers gently, and changed her position. He broke off, as though finding it impossible to explain. Then throwing his arms about her, he pressed his head against her breast, feeling the beat, beat of her heart.

There was a short, sharp cry from a motor horn. The sound came as though from another world—a world far, far away.

"Look at me, John."

He looked up and saw her face bending over him. It was outlined sharply against the sky. Her eyes came nearer, and he could see they were moist and full of a strange hunger. He opened his mouth to speak, but she covered it with her lips.

Trees

M. T. WOOLLASTON

While my pear-tree beareth
And my apple-tree's in prime,
And my quince-tree her quinces weareth,
My willow-tree whileth away the time.

And while my plum-tree plummeth,
And my pine-trees coney climb,
And my gum-tree mighty becometh—
My willow-tree whileth away the time.

Can anyone call it a crime?
And they leave her alone—they know
They'd less apple, less pear, less grow,
For resenting her whiling away the time.

The Crazy Garden

E. O. PETERSEN

THE TWO MEN who have been planting cabbages, for several weeks now, still find starting each morning rather a difficult matter. One of them must, with extreme caution, step over the many strands of barbed wire zigzagged across the garden, and even across the paths. This wire is stretched about a foot or so above the ground, but the other man appears not to be troubled by it and walks, seemingly, in the ordinary way, right through it to the cabbage patch. We are no great distance from the sea, it is true, but it delays the work if a planter must first take up a rigid stance with one arm upraised, and proceed to hold back the merchant ships and fishing boats so that the destroyers may have a clear passage through the straits. Another man, who helps these two men and carries the necessary plants from the nursery beds, finds the weather cold—bitterly cold, he says—but this is early December, hot and dry, after the wettest autumn, winter and spring that has ever been recorded in the province, and he wears a military greatcoat closely buttoned and tied around the waist with binder twine. At times he stands with bowed head, hands filled with cabbage plants, contemplating the soil—reminding one at once of that old painting, 'The man with a hoe'—but at other times his face is raised to the sun, his eyes closed. Does he, perhaps, call down the blessings of the gods upon the cabbages? or maybe evoke the aid of the elements? No, it is simply that he awaits the word. Yet 'simple' is hardly the correct definition, for the reception of the 'voice' is so astonishing and so complicated a matter that radio is but a child's toy to it. It comes at last, the magic symbol, the last of the wire is safely passed, the destroyers are through, and the cabbage plants are handed out.

In case this shall appear somewhat confusing, I must hasten to say that the work in the other parts of the garden seems to be going along quite well. An argument is going on between three men who are weeding carrots, and one of the chaps putting in leeks in a nearby patch is planting them in bunches of a dozen or more. But there is method in this for when the time comes to dig them, they will be in nice handy bunches, or so the planter says.

The argument is a very involved one, for one man —and our principal partner who claims to have £20,000 invested in the garden, which he admits is profitably invested—is trying to explain decimal fractions to another who replies with remarks about contaminated soil. The third man, his shirt front bulged tightly with varied possessions, and at a short distance seeming to have a chest of about sixty inches, works in a methodical way, thinning the carrots and putting them carefully in his jacket pocket. His pocket is never filled at the end of the day, but do not imagine this a reflection upon his industry, for he uses the carrots at morning-tea time as a brush to clean his cup.

The contaminated soil is a matter rather difficult to understand—it has been explained to me many times, but still I am doubtful if I have it aright. However, it centres upon the effluvia emanating from certain females who sometimes pass along the road beside the garden. It is not to be confused with the trouble for which a well-known soap is advertised as a specific. Rather it is an aura, a subtle outcome of femaleness which acts like a scorching blight upon the soil. The third man in the party does not add much to either side of the argument, but seems now and again to score an effective point, and one quite unanswerable, by remarking 'What the hell is the good of growing cabbages without roofs in their mouths?'

At a first glance the planting of tomatoes would seem a simple matter—one just puts the roots in the

ground, and that is all there is to it—but we go deeply into these things, and things are not always what they seem. Four men are carrying on with this job, and the leading man says definitely that the longest roots must be inclined to the south, with the plant itself leaning rather to east of north. He claims always to set his plants this way, but seeing that he lifts the tomato-plant with a good ball of soil and with hardly a glance at it, there must be a secret method of ascertaining the length of the roots. Himself, he likens it to the sexing of day-old chicks, and insists that he acquired the knowledge from a certain Oriental. Now this Chinaman is a laundryman and has never worked in a garden, which shows there is more than meets the eye in gardening. Yet it is, perhaps, with the removal of the lateral growths from the more forwards plants that the complications really arise. The first or lowest side-shoot should be left to grow states one man, and his authority is that Pliny says so. Who is this Pliny? it may be asked. Well, of course, he does not work in our garden, but he is believed to have had a garden somewhere in Italy, some few years ago. Carefully-worded inquiry elicits the information that the reference is to Pliny the Elder, and surprisingly the title is understood to refer to his official capacity and not to his age.

The man who quotes Pliny styles himself a veterinary surgeon, a graduate of the Parent Church and a professor of advanced dietary—so you see, he should know something about tomatoes. We overcome the matter of the first side-shoots by sending another man along to pinch them out. The Pliny man does not appear to notice anything amiss, so that a firm belief in the theory does not really interfere with modern practice.

Scarecrows are a necessity in most large gardens, but we have no need to erect any, for at all times three or four may be observed in various part of the garden. Some move occasionally but in general a statue-like

pose and a striking attitude is the more usual. A very effective one is the man who assumes the stance of the well known 'The 'Wrestler' and sings in a fairly good tenor *I'll Walk Beside You.* But he does not walk—he just stands, sometimes for an hour or more at a time.

Two men hoeing amongst the large patch of silver beet decide that it is time for the morning ablutions, and they walk the full length of the garden to a certain tap, passing by several others by the way. One washes his feet and legs, the other his head, and the former then washes his socks and boots and puts them on again still wet. Nor does the head require to be dried, the surplus water being just shaken off. Perhaps, I should say knocked off, for the process is as follows. He comes up to the garden shed and then steps five paces from it. The head is lowered and the arms spread out like wings, then he bounds forward and crashes into the wall head-on. Sometimes only two crashes are necessary, but I have seen four or five. It would appear that the cold water would be necessary after rather than before the butting.

The very old theory of sowing and planting according to the phases of the moon does not find credence here, many of the gardeners pronouncing the idea as rubbish, usually with expressive adjectives, and there is one in particular who doubts the sanity of those who mention the matter. Yet he is the one man of all men who should give careful thought to it, for during the waxing of the moon he is an ardent follower, a disciple even, of Ratana, but when the moon has passed the full his belief wanes and he rejects his erstwhile leader, and has even been heard to refer to him in scornful terms. The states of belief and disbelief follow each other in such regular sequence that one can always tell the phase of the moon by just listening to him for a few minutes.

You will have heard the story of Johnny Appleseed, the man who in the early days of American coloniza-

tion, walked the countryside planting apple seeds by the thousands, and to whom the great development of apple growing in America is said to owe so much. Like me, you have probably put this down as a legend of eccentricity, but lately I have been convinced that if the story is true it shows only an urge to self expression. One of our gardeners has a like desire, only in this case it is usually potatoes. These he gathers and plants in any place at hand, so if you should notice potatoes growing amongst the bedding-plants in the wide and mixed border along the main drive, you will understand. Usually potatoes, but if these are not available, pieces of orange peel, small stones or odds and ends of cardboard serve the purpose.

At the close of a rather trying but interesting day, I asked a man who has been weeding lettuces, how he has been getting along. 'Not too good,' he replies. 'I have been tied up with the slugs all day, and have not been able to do much.' 'You see,' he continues, 'they have swarmed all over my boots and it took me all my time to fight them off.' Perhaps I had better call it a day. I might last out till the doctor sees me.

Two Poems

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

PRELUDE

Time is the seventh arrow
in the Indian raid,
the long one, the fatal one
of the fusillade.

Time is the qualifier
clause in your deed
repudiation of desire
end of appeal and need.

The prospector gone crazed
with Utopia hid in the hills
the poisonous flower raised,
the dam where the flood spills.

The sudden benevolence
of rain after drought,
the sting of unseen chance
when the light is put out.

Time is the evil wizard
who moves through your dream
sandstorm and cold blizzard
where the curious roam.

Time is the rail broken
beside the tourist track,
men in the snow who waken
and find their hands gone black.

Time is a term for these,
for breath and blood and air,
the ghost of older seas
that will make all things square.

WALK PAST THOSE HOUSES ON A SUNDAY MORNING

Walk past those houses on a Sunday morning
with the piano stumbling in the front room
where the mechanic freed from tools takes shears
to clip his hedges, talk of politics.

Or move along the lake, or down the track
sit under butts of logs and watch the mangroves,
the chips, the pottery shards, while distant farms
grow out of fog to sun; for it was here
that pedant summer rose to teach us fate.

Think how the threads were coming close together:
remember the month, the day, the hour, and the
ungainly kitbag dragged off home in the tram
and two days after
set in the hot Waikato close to the river—
bell tents, new straw, and uniforms everywhere.

Leave was a chance to take the bike
and go crawling into the ranges. Here were places
not to be seen as before, and places to visit:
a house with oaks where there was one
was quick with sympathy but did not understand.

Remember all these things: the League ball punted
across the park
processional the sails of eighteen footers
and a cold salad at five.

Somewhere there is value to them. Like
the piano stumbling
something is cast into being that will
take shape in the end.

A Fragment from a longer work

Growing Up

FRANK SARGESON

FOR WEEKS ON end that winter there were days without a cloud. Nobody could remember anything like it. Every morning the frost lay heavy and white, and in places where the sun never got it wouldn't melt all day. Where it covered the bricks on the shady side of the woodshed Henry trod it down, and it turned into ice. Each day the ice got thicker, and boys came in to see it on the way home from school. They ran and jumped on it and slid, and talked of getting more bricks and making a proper skating rink.

You shivered getting up in the morning and going to school, walking with your fingers tucked inside the top of your trousers, and maybe you shivered in school as well, but it was nice out in the sun for morning interval, and sitting in the sun while you ate your lunch. You felt the cold coming on again in the afternoon before they let you out of school, but there'd be drill or football practice to warm you up, and at home the kitchen would be warm with mother getting the dinner, the pots boiling, and the meat sizzling and popping in the oven. And when it was time to light the fire in the dining-room you could go and lie on the hearthrug. Though Henry was getting a big boy now. His mother would come in and say, Get up off that hearthrug, a big boy like you! And father, just home from work, would say, Your mother shouldn't have to tell you. And auntie Clara might put her spoke in and call you a great lout. It made you feel all sorts of things, things you couldn't say what. You wanted to answer back and sulked instead. But you were hungry and there was the good dinner, mother heaping your plate, and the

family talk—Arnold's talk about his boss, and father and mother's grown-up talk, and Annie's baby talk, and auntie Clara making everybody laugh with the things she said because she was an old maid. And of course you had plenty to say yourself, and sometimes you couldn't wait until other people had finished, and got asked if you'd ever learn not to interrupt.

After he'd helped auntie Clara with the dishes Henry had to do his homework. It was a worry, a bad spot on something that was perfect, though you never thought of it as perfect—or never did until you remembered about your homework. Wanting to be nearer the fire you squirmed about on the piano stool drawn up to the table. Your backside—though *derrière* was what you called it now—had had enough sitting on hard seats for the day, but you had to sit there and squirm, and try to work out your algebra and learn your French verbs off by heart. Time dragged, but it was done in a sort of fashion at last, and then what had been so wished for and looked forward to came true. That something perfect took the shape of a ball, or so it would seem now and then. You lived inside the ball, and it was lovely to have it all round you, you living contented right inside at the centre. There was room for you by the fire, there was only father and mother, Annie had been put to bed, and auntie Clara went to bed early, and Arnold went out always and never said where he went. Anyhow, there was room for you there by the fire, room for your easy chair and father's and mother's, mother with her ball of wool doing her darning, and father reading the newspaper. With your soft slippers on you could even put your feet up near the mantelpiece without having anything said. And with the feel of the fire on your legs you could read your book, not trash, you weren't allowed to read that, but Edward S. Ellis was all right. *The Hunters of the Ozarks, The Lost Trail, The Last Warpath,* Deerfoot was in every one of them, and from inside that ball where you lived contented, you looked out and saw Deerfoot

close his eyes to pray as he ran through the forest—you had tried that once going to school and bumped into a telegraph pole—saw him rescue the paleface boys when they were hard-pressed by the Indians and half-frozen by the snow. It was wonderful. At the same time as you were there by the fire with father and mother, you lived it all with Deerfoot and the paleface boys away over in America in the frozen forest. You *were* Deerfoot and the paleface boys, though mainly Deerfoot. Yet you weren't either, because the time you were Deerfoot praying with his eyes closed you had bumped into the telegraph pole.

But there was the clock up on the mantelpiece. How goes the enemy? you heard people say. And mother looked at the clock and said, It's your bedtime, Henry. And you didn't move or say anything. Mother was going to stop you from being Deerfoot, to make you get out from the inside of that ball. You'd stop her from doing it too quickly if you could, but you couldn't slow her down much with father there. So after mother had told you once more you got up and tidied up our homework, asked if you could have an orange, and said this and that just to put off going to bed a few minutes longer. But you had to go, and it was cold in the bathroom cleaning your teeth, and you shivered getting undressed and saying your prayers, and afterwards in bed, but everything was all right once you got warm, then you could be Deerfoot again, warm in bed yet at the same time running through the snow that covered the ground beneath the trees of the forest. And bed was a good place to be Deerfoot in, there weren't any telegraph poles there.

So that was the end of the day, another day gone and one day nearer the grave you'd once heard a man say. He was only a borough labourer working on the road, and he said it to another like himself, they were knocking off, finished for the day and putting their tools in a box, and Henry heard and remembered—the two men, the man who spoke, and the man

who heard and said, Aye. You were liable to remember any time, you didn't know why, but of course if you did remember when you were in bed being Deerfoot, well, it was only for a second and it didn't worry you. You went on being Deerfoot, went on so long you should have heard father and mother going to bed, yet didn't because there wasn't enough difference between sleeping and waking.

The lovely days kept on for weeks on end that winter, the nights and mornings freezing cold, but in between the sun burning in an empty sky. And it was after just such a day that one night there came a knock at the kitchen door. There was only Henry to hear because father and mother had gone to bed early, gone only just a few minutes ago, and Henry could stay up and read while the fire lasted, but he mustn't put any more wood on, and he had to see the fire was safe, and remember to turn out the light. Well, perhaps he might put a piece of wood on, it depended, father might notice in the morning, meantime he was still warm and he was reading—and then came the knock. You never get a knock on the kitchen door at that time of night, and there on your own it made you feel a little frightened. But you were a big boy now, they were always telling you boys weren't cry-babies and didn't tell lies or do things that you did when you were only a little kid. So Henry, a big boy, went and put the light on in the kitchen and opened the door. But as soon as it was open he wasn't a big boy any longer, because a swagger was standing there on the verandah, though a different sort of swagger from most, they were usually old men, but this one looked hardly anything more than a boy. He hadn't any money, he said, and he wanted a place to sleep for the night, and Henry said he would have to go and ask his father. He left the man at the door and went down the passage, and outside the bedroom he said, Father, there's a man at the door. His father said, What? and his mother said, You can come in, and he went in and his father

was kneeling down in his pyjamas saying his prayers, his mother sitting up in bed plaiting her hair. Well, his father listened to Henry, still kneeling and looking out of his hands that were over his face, and he said the man couldn't stay there. Tell him he must go right away, he said. And Henry said, Where will he sleep, father? If necessary he can go to the police station, his father said. Run and tell him, his mother said.

So Henry went and told the swagger, and the swagger stood there and said it was a cold night, then he said he could do with a bite of something to eat. So Henry went back along the passage, and mother was lying down in bed, but father hadn't finished saying his prayers. Mother said to take the man into the kitchen, and told Henry what to get out of the safe to give him to eat, and she said to father, It's no good giving them money, they only spend it on drink. And father looked out of his hands again and said, If you don't get rid of him in twenty minutes come back and tell me, and mother talked about locking the door but what about Arnold? So when he'd got rid of the swagger Henry was to leave a note for Arnold to be sure and lock the door after he came in.

Well, there you were in the kitchen with the swagger who looked hardly any more than a boy, perhaps not much older than your brother Arnold. He was thin-faced, thin as a match, his clothes dirty and torn, and he was shivering with cold and no wonder, because the kitchen was cold enough to make Henry shiver as well. And you thought, feeling the cold, and getting out bread and butter and cold meat, and heating some milk on the gas, Where do you sleep when you've nowhere to sleep? The swag was on the floor, only a little swag wrapped in a blanket, if it was all blankets it mightn't be so bad if you had to sleep out, under a tree perhaps or in some shed. But gee, it would be freezing cold on a night like this. And Henry didn't know what to say, and the swagger

was too busy eating to talk, but when Henry had nothing to do he said, Are you out of a job? Then the swagger talked and ate at the same time, telling about the hundreds of miles that he'd walked, and how he couldn't get a job. And when Henry asked him he said he hadn't got a home or any people. But of course mother always said you couldn't believe the things swaggers said, everybody could get work if they wanted it, hard graft never did anybody any harm, but some people weren't fond of it, that was the trouble, and drink.

Then when the swagger had had enough to eat Henry started to put the things away, looking at the clock, and remembering what his father had said. And the swagger asked him if he had a cigarette, but it was no good asking you that. So the swagger got up and said there were sheds out the back and couldn't he doss there? And you felt yourself go red, but you said it was no good, your father had said he must go right away. And you managed to get rid of him in the end, and mother called out, but softly so as not to wake Annie and auntie Clara, and you went to the bedroom door and said he had gone, and she reminded you about the note for Arnold and told you to go straight to bed. So you fixed the note, and remembered about everything, and it was so cold that by the time you'd said your prayers and were in bed your teeth were chattering. But you cuddled yourself up in bed and soon got warm, snug as a bug in a rug, and you thought about the swagger and wondered where he would sleep, but mother and father knew best, you were only a boy, sometimes not even a big boy, it depended, and had no say, and you never remembered anything more, except that you'd been dreaming, until you woke when it was just getting daylight. And there was a funny smell in the room, not a nice smell, and Arnold was standing by his bed in his pyjamas, and the swagger was standing there too, all dressed but with his boots in his hand, and a cigarette in his mouth but not lighted. And before

you could speak Arnold had bent over you and said, but so as you could hardly hear, that if you opened your mouth and breathed a word you'd never get a lend of his camera again, and you wouldn't ride on the back of his motor bike when he bought it at Christmastime.

To Uncertain Leaders

ALAN FALCONER

The full rich chords of engine boom
and in the belly of the bomber hung,
its eggs of death, the spawn of bombs—
the giant Lockheed heavy with its young.

But still the future is our one concern,
. . . the bombers pass, but we return.

Faintly the mist in morning light
gleams on the massive wings and metal hull,
and sharp against the sky sprout guns—
but dull our hearts as this grey morning dull.

For still the future is our one concern,
. . . the bombers pass, but we return.

And though our way is for the moment proud
and we can answer fully for our deeds,
give liberty to those for whom we kill—
or we will show you where this mission leads.

For still the future is our one concern,
. . . the bombers pass, but we return.

The Guardsman's Tale

JAMES HARRIS

IN THE HOME GUARD days, our platoon headquarters was at the foot of a single file zig-zag called Parker Street. Above, there was a belt of *Pinus Insignis,* and from the top of the zig-zag the track went through the pines, and on up a long open grass slope to the saddle, where it left our sector and responsible care. For all we worried it might have led over to Erewhon.

We were for ever defending this headquarters of ours against the other platoons, which had the younger men in them. In these exercises it was always our section that was up in the line of pines, waiting for an enemy who never came that way, down the clear slope, but always through the built-up flat below, where cover was plentiful.

Sunday after Sunday we squatted up there, and that pine belt didn't stay unimproved land. Our lookout's crow's nest gradually developed into a tree house and the slit trenches became secret beer pits. When the exercises were on, we would usually post a sentry, pass a bottle round, and talk of shoes and ships and sealing-wax until the sentry reported the lieutenant seen coming up the zig-zag. When he arrived, he would find a half-dozen men skilfully concealed in the shadows, ready to blast with imaginary fire the whole of the open hillside. And when he had departed satisfied, men and bottles would emerge from trenches and pine-needles, and Guardsman Billy Norfolk would continue to relate of his experiences as shoemaker, sailor, or foreman in a sealing-wax foundry. There seemed to be no experience the man couldn't produce to order from his voluminous past.

One particular Sunday afternoon, we were sitting in a sunny patch inside the trees, quietly sleeping off our bully-beef lunch, and some one started talking

about the current Liberty Loan, something financial, anyway. This led us on to consider banks, and to the question of whether banks can create credit. The fact was, we had been wondering how Billy Norfolk would get on as a banker, and we wanted to give him a chance.

Would he take the bait? We tried to argue the credit question and give him a chance to break in, but none of us really knew the arguments on either side. One would say "of course they can!" Another would reply smartly, "of course they can't!" There'd be a sidelong glance at old Billy to see how he was taking it. It was getting more and more like a small children's argument, when at last Billy Norfolk collected himself and waded in. "Too bloody right they can!" he said.

"And how do you know?" someone asked.

"Well. When I was my own banker I created credit. Right and left I did. Didn't I ever tell you about it?"

"Billy Norfolk?" I said, "you were never a banker here, and you were never a banker in Aussie. And if you were, why did you give it up?"

"It wasn't here, and it wasn't in Aussie either. Did I ever say it was? It was on Cup o'Tea Island, that's where I was a banker. I founded my own bank on that island with nothing but a pen and a dud cheque-book."

"The name of the island sounds familiar," said the sentry from up in the tree. "Go on about your banking. Who else was on the island?"

"You want to hear about it? Well, there were two others on the island, the two jokers who'd been in the lifeboat with me. One of them was a carpenter, and the other knew all about gardening. Luckily I had a lot of seeds with me that a Frenchman had given me in New Caledonia. I'd been meaning to try them out on my brother's place at Pukekohe. By the time we got to this island, see, I know what these two jokers' trades were, and I'd reckoned they'd come

in useful. It wasn't a bad sort of island, there was a stream and everything, like. When we landed, I left my two good shipmates to haul the boat up, and had look round. When I'd made up my mind, I called the two of them up, and I said to the market gardener, look here, Tom Jenks, you're a gardener, I said. I want you to get to work and clear a garden thirty by forty right here by the stream. Later on we can build a dam higher up, and irrigate if it gets dry."

"And I said to the carpenter, Alf Calvert I said, you're a carpenter and builder, and I want you to cut and dress enough timber to make me a bungalow twenty by sixteen on this ridge, and two whares, one sixteen by twelve, and one fourteen by ten, over on the other side. He says that's alright, but who's going to pay him? I says I am. Three-ten a week for a gardener, four-ten a week for a carpenter, forty-four hour week. He says, make it five pound ten and it's a deal. Quite impossible, I said, and in the end we finished up by making it four pounds and five pounds for the forty hour week. Actually it would have mattered sweet-all to me, I suppose, if we'd have made it forty pound a week for the gardener and fifty for the carpenter. Anything as long as the two rates were different, so as to keep them from liking each other."

While the work was going on, we slept and kept our things under the boat. We'd brought her up and turned her upside down on some blocks. The others had their tools, of course, and I had mine. What mine amounted to was the cheque-book, a fountain-pen with some ink in it, and a pocket knife. But that's all a man needs when he has the right sort of shipmates."

"I used to keep a tally of the days on the boat's locker. I used the knife for that. I had to save the ink for the cheque-book. Every Friday I gave Tom a cheque to pay bearer four pounds, and Alf a cheque to pay bearer five pounds, and hoped they'd never

get through to Sydney, where they were worthless anyway."

"Old Alf may have been a bit dull in some ways, but I'll say this for him, he was a quick worker. In a couple of months he had the buildings up for me, and forty pounds in his pocket that I had to earn back off him. The first vegetables were coming up too, and there were enough to allow me a change of diet. Lovely young carrots I had, I remember. The others had to carry on a while longer on coconuts."

"When the buildings were finished, I laid Alf Calvert off. But I kept old Tom on for a while to make another garden. I moved into my bungalow, and put the two batches up for rent. It was two pounds a week for the smaller one, two ten a week for the big one. Rents are high up there because of the white ants. A man has to rebuild about every ten years. Right off, my gardener steps in and rents the big one, just to show the rest he's in a steady job, like. The poor old unemployed wood-butcher had to crawl out from under the boat and rent the other one, just so as to save his dignity. Even then he had the face to complain of the rent being too high.

"I had a few matches, and started a fire in my place, and kept it going all the time. The unemployed carpenter used to chop wood for me on piece-rates. When the vegetables were grown, I started a restaurant. I ran accounts for my two customers, and every time what they owed me for food and rent came to four pounds or five pounds, they paid me back a cheque."

"I didn't have to do any work at all really, just keep the fire, the calendar and the accounts, and do a bit of cooking now and then. If there'd been something to drink besides coconut milk, I reckon it would have been a perfect life."

From the tree overhead, came the voice of the forgotten sentry, saying "get another bottle for me too, while you're at it." And Billy Norfolk said "may as well get me two, and I won't bother you again."

We all shifted a bit, because the sun had shifted, and then the tale went on.

"I'd have a look at the vegetables most mornings, and perhaps tell Tom Jenks to dig some seaweed into a vacant plot, and lime it with some powdered coral. Then I'd go fishing for as long as I wanted to, cook myself some dinner with enough over for the two customers, and chalk up five bob against each of them. I was making sure of getting all my cheques back."

"Afternoons, there was no need to do anything much. Just had to see that Tom got on with his work, and that the unemployed didn't riot. Pretty soon though, I had to take action about the unemployed. Alf Calvert's cheques gave out, and he was near starvation. I couldn't have him stealing my vegetables and building a whare for himself, or he'd have spoilt the whole system. Tom might start stealing vegetables too, and then the two of them get together and steal a light from my fire, and do their own cooking. I lay in my hammock all one afternoon, and thought it all out. It was a dangerous situation. I didn't want to have to hire Tom's tools and dig my own garden, it wouldn't have been respectable for a business man like me. I had to think out a solution."

"What did I do? I did what many others have done since, I started a public works programme. I engaged Alf at the reduced rate of three quid a week, to make paths all over the island. He made them down to the stream, out to the fishing places, and round the coast. It was a proper tourist resort by the time he'd finished with it, and I wished there'd been more than two people to sell sections to. I could have cleaned up a packet."

"After I'd successfully dealt with the unemployment problem the easy life went on, for one joker anyway. The only trouble was, there was none of this beer to drink, and I didn't have anything to smoke either. Thanks Bob, have one of mine afterwards!"

As Guardsman Norfolk paused to light a cigarette, word came down the tree from the sentry. "Hey!" he said, "what's up with those sheep?"

As we crawled to our posts, we saw that the whole mob of sheep on the hillside had moved down near our shelter-belt. Someone answered the sentry's question, "Maybe they like the smell of bull."

Fifty yards away, a dozen men with a few rifles rose from behind small tussocks, and charged down, scattering the sheep. The sentry and Billy Norfolk rattled their riflebolts, and the unarmed rest of us said "Bang you're dead! Bang you're dead!" But they came right in for all that, and more men appeared through the trees on either side. Number One Platoon had cleaned us up fair and square. "Bang you're dead nothing," Billy Norfolk said to them, though. "We got the lot of you as you came over the top there. Look, my sights are still at four hundred!"

"Listen Number One," said our sentry from the branches. "If you go down the zig-zag very quietly you'll catch the lieutenant with his pants down too. I saw him go into the hut two minutes ago, to have his afternoon tea."

That got rid of the platoon, and we told Billy he might as well finish his story. "We were taken off," he said, "that's all. But you see what I mean about banks? What I could do, they could do, I reckon. Here, who the hell knocked my beer over!"

Eruption at Tarawera

P. W. ROBERTSON

THIS EVENT, near enough in our history, already becomes remote; a few witnesses are still alive, but the story has not found the dignity of legend. Attached as we are to proportionalities for the reaffirmation of fragments of life, art, history, we seek a comparison with Vesuvius. The amount of emitted ash in the two eruptions bears some approximation. But whereas the Italian volcano settled its deposit in a neat perimeter, with an even flow of lava, our eruption shifted along a mountain ridge, then ejected a lake with its water and mud, whilst a tearing wind scurried the debris over a vast space, to the Bay of Plenty and the sea beyond. No precisely vicious city was engulphed for the prying glances of later centuries to reconstruct; a Maori village disappeared with its little group of bewildered inhabitants, and a haphazard European settlement was overwhelmed. But it happened that a natural feature of considerable charm, already winning a kind of fame in distant places, was obliterated. The beauty of the White Terraces has been sentimentalised, and is not immediately apparent from the consideration of certain posthumous sketches and paintings, nor does it find a place in the poetry of Maori mythology.

So much, approximately, was my knowledge of Tarawera, as one recent summer day I sat in the Albert Park in Auckland, idly contemplating the scoria-tinted earth exposed by the air-raid excavations. My thoughts spread to find form in the volcanic land-and-seascape in whose midst I meditated. I recalled the nice disposition of the eruptive forces, the delicacy of the long lava slopes, and Rangitoto, floating on the lapping blue water. Such meditations I found gradually merging into conversation with an old man, who had taken a place on the seat beside

me. Presently came the information that he had witnessed the eruption at Tarawera, whereupon he told me the story, and the not unheroic part he had played in it. As I listened, I noted his careful discriminations, with due appreciation that I, curious in these things, should have the privilege of this tale, often told it might be across the years, now reaching perhaps a final perfection for this stranger, found by chance yet so eager to approve.

He had not long arrived in New Zealand and was in charge of a camp prospecting the proposed railway to Rotorua. He recalled the evening before the eruption, how he had looked out into the night and watched the clouds racing in a keen strong wind that blew in from the west. At about two o'clock he was awakened by a great roaring noise and violent tremblings of the earth. Rising he found he was in full view of the spectacle. From the crater of the volcano rose upward a stream of red-hot ash towards the stars, for the night was now clear, and attaining a great height it spread out like some gigantic mushroom. The stem of this seismic fungus appeared to be perpendicular, a fact which astonished him when he noted the fierceness of the wind. From the upper portion of this cloud of ash spurted jets of lightning, apparently outwards into the star-enlivened dimness of the sky. We discussed this for a moment together, agreeing that it did not seem possible for the electric charges, engendered by the friction between the uprising ash and the air, to proceed out into a mere void. It was possibly an illusion, we decided, the charges passing from one part of the ash to another not immediately visible. The rumblings became more vehement, and the great cloud of ash spread and spread, obliterating the very night itself. What was happening during those long waiting hours was a matter for dubious and unsettling conjecture for him and his companions. The actual events were reconstructed from observations during the days that followed. The main eruption, starting from Mount

Tarawera itself, had proceeded by series of secondary vents along a mountain ridge in the direction of Lake Rotomohana, some five miles away. At the head of this lake were the White Terraces, and this frail structure had been in the direct line of the subterranean convulsions whose course and conclusion was the lake itself. Then in a grand climax the glowing scoria pulsed through the bottom of the lake, projecting its indiscriminate waters and hurling the accompanying mud over the countryside.

This drastic scene, now sharply conjured up in our imaginations, was aptly followed by a calmer recital, as the narrator proceeded to interpose an account of the White Terraces, as he recalled them in the flush of their fateful loveliness. My excitement in his story prevented the proper assessment of this digression. Moreover I was considering the idea that this concise beauty, invoked amongst that harsh disposition of nature, was like some aesthetic creation, wrought out of the artist's passion, an easement of suffering, but discovered imperfect and destroyed on an outrageous impulse. It happened, so he was explaining, that the waters of an intermittant geyser flowed down a declivity to the lake. In the long course of time they had worn the surface of the slope into a series of ridges, which gradually formed themselves into narrow basins. The constant drip and aeration of these waters caused a slow deposition of silica, thus forming those delicate surfaces which shone so memorably in the dim volcanic setting. Likewise fed by a neighbouring geyser, was the smaller, but even more beautiful, Pink Terrace, which was simultaneously destroyed.

The thermal waters of Lake Rotomahana, heated by the flow from these and other geysers, and some subterranean influx, were of a brilliant blue colour, and esteemed by the Maoris for their therapeutic value. In the centre of the lake were two tiny islets, Puai and Pukura, and to one of these, a few days before the eruption, had retired Rangiheua, an old

Tohourangi chief, with a few members of his tribe for repose and meditation. But these sacred islets constituted a pitiable refuge against the wrathful fate that was so shortly to overwhelm them.

There was no dawn on the day after the eruption for a dense cloud of ashes blotted out the light of the sun. My friend and his companions took breakfast by the flicker of candles, they apprehensive and not eager, whilst the earth still rumbled and quivered, to accompany him to a settlement near the mountain on a projected scheme of rescue. I sensed the undercurrents of emotion and tension. These men were recent settlers from England, and they might well be wondering what was this awesome territory they had invaded. My friend had told me that his home was a village in Wiltshire. From the windows of his house was a view of a long earthen barrow, burying-place of the remote inhabitants of the land, and just beyond was Stonehenge, and the little town of Amesbury, where once the Romans had camped. That all symbolised an infrangible security, constituted fixed and arbitrary values remote from this sulphurous contamination, this rumbling unstable volcanic soil. He persisted in his plan, and went off alone to Rotorua. He found the inhabitants that remained full of wondering concern, unwilling for such investigations as he proposed. In the end, however, he persuaded the local schoolmaster to join him. They acquired a trap and pair of horses, and set off towards Wairoa, which it was reported had been destroyed by the eruption. Half way to their destination the road passed through a stretch of bush, where by some chance in that arid volcanic environment the soil was rich and fertile. Great trees grew there in relative luxury, and in high summer the place was musical with the song of tuis among the rata blossoms. This happy place had in that dark night become an area of ruin and devastation. Many trees were prostrate or lay at curious angles among their disrupted branches, and on each tree

and branch, to its windward side, was a heavy plaster of mud. It was evident that this was the region where the ejected contents of the lake had fallen. Arriving at the edge of this desolation they found that the subterranean rumblings and quakings became more insistent; the overhanging cloud of ashes pressed down upon them more threateningly, and playing in and out of that sombre pall was a continuous electrical flashing and crackling. Further passage by the vehicle had become impossible; they unharnessed the horses and tethered them in the shelter of an overhanging cliff. To their amazement the two animals quietly began to nibble fragments of grass, totally oblivious to the odious turmoil.

They proceeded by foot, picking their passage over the frozen mud along the course of the obliterated road. After a short distance they stumbled on a Maori, sitting with his head bowed between his knees, continuously moaning. Huddled against his side was a cat, which sought some measure of comfort from these human cries. Receiving no sense or response from the bewildered man, they continued their way, assuring him that they would shortly return. Close at hand was his horse, patiently waiting with a heavy weight of mud on its back. They relieved it of its burden and proceeded to the accompanyment of further rumblings. At the devastated township it was ascertained that most of its inhabitants had scattered before the torrent of mud had settled on their homes. From one of the wrecked houses groans were heard and they rescued a woman who had been pinned down by its falling timbers. Having chaffed her frozen limbs to some measure of life, they improvised a stretcher and carried her back to their vehicle. Their patient animals awaited them still completely unperturbed, but of the Maori and his cat there was no trace. After calling for him and receiving no reply, they slowly journeyed back to Rotorua.

That then was the tale that was told to me, with well-balanced phrase, in gentle reminiscence. In the

transcription of it I have lost much of its original vigour, and substituted terms and qualities and interests of my own. However, it would have been difficult to have destroyed entirely the stark Virgilian immediacy of that Maori, moaning amid the desolation, and the patient horse with his hideous load of mud. I looked through the trees of the Park to the University clock, which lacked a few moments to one. I had not realised that the telling of the tale had lasted the better part of two hours. The pleasant sense of the summer day was on us as we rose to depart. A great white mountain-cloud climbed reassuringly into the blue sky, and somewhere below it reposed Rangitoto, passion all spent, outlined in its deliberate beauty. At the entrance-gate we stopped, I thanking him once again for his story and raising my hat; he, a little astonished, lifted his hat in turn, bowed and went his way.

Coal

ANTON VOGT

These hills are cemeteries whose ancient dead
Rise to fulfil a new exigency;
Totara grown tall in prehistoric beds
Speed with an unexpected urgency.

Faces and hands are black from the day's events,
But the seam is gold.
Coal is black only to the unimaginative.
Bottled by earthquake, lidded by avalanche,
Coal is the sun's rays stored for future reference.

In my fire to-night the flickering lights
Are a resurrection of rainbows.

An Annual Affair

GREVILLE TEXIDOR

IT ALMOST SEEMED to be blowing up for rain. Every minute or two the wind came across the paddocks, like a lorry changing gears, and round the lonely store corner. The store looked lonely because it was closed for Boxing Day. The orange drinks and weeties in the window and the country scene with stout letters, KEEP FIT cutting across made you feel sad, as if you had eaten too much. The wallops from the wind made you feel tired. Joy sat on the step of the store.

Come on, get up now, her Mum said. You don't want to dirty your dress before we start.

Joy got up. The wind passed again blowing up dust and rain. It was late. It was nearly nine. Mum reckoned Auntie Laurel was holding them up.

Before the lorry came round the corner they could hear the kids screeching. It was like a cage of cockatoos on wheels. Uncle Nick was in front with Dad. Behind, besides the kids, there was Auntie Laurel and a flash lady from town. She had brought something for the children for Boxing Day. It was some crackers, but they couldn't pull them because Mum said it wasn't the proper time. Mum didn't think much of crackers.

The Domain in front of the hotel was packed out with cars and lorries. Dad growled because the place near the fence where they always parked, was taken. Mum only said, I thought we were going to be late.

The cars looked funny all packed round the hotel because there was plenty of room along the beach. The hotel stood by itself away from the baches. It was tall and a dark red colour like the one in Joy's Granny's picture, *The Broad Way*. They didn't have pictures like that in Joy's home. They had one of a bunch of pansies and one of a cathedral. In Granny's

picture the hotel had a Union Jack on top and through the windows you could see the people inside, playing cards and dancing. But the real hotel windows were always closed. It looked as if nobody lived there, but round at the side there was a small door and men going in and out.

The old jetty was standing over the mud with only its last two legs in the water. Brian and the boys made a dash for the trolley, that was used for loading timber in the old days, and started to push each other up and down, but Mum yelled to them that they'd fall in the water, and Auntie Laurel said the jetty was dangerous and ought to be seen to.

Mum and Dad and Miss Jenkins, the flash lady, sat down on the step of the lorry. Miss Jenkins had several rows of rolls on top of her head, and slacks which were tight behind, and dark red finger-nails. She said how pretty everything looked after the rain.

Dad kept looking hard at Miss Jenkin's finger-nails, then looking away.

Everyone seems to think it's nice down here in the summer, Mum said, of course we're used to it.

I suppose you always come here, Miss Jenkins said.

We always manage to get down for the picnic, Dad said. It's an annual affair.

Mum said, It looks as if we've been unlucky with the weather though.

Dad said, It's generally like this round about Christmas.

But anyway, Mum said, it does make a change and the kiddies do enjoy it.

Dad took out his cigarette case and offered Miss Jenkins one but she said, No thanks. She did occasionally, but not just now.

Dad said, Excuse me, he had to meet a chap, and went over towards the hotel.

It began to rain a bit and the wind was chilly. Mum said they might as well go for a walk as it wasn't lunch time yet, and Miss Jenkins could see the view

from further up. Everyone always said it was rather nice, only of course the tide was wrong now.

Joy had to fetch Terry and Mavis. Mum was nervous about them falling into the mud. They were right at the end of the jetty pretending to fish. Jim was there too, he had rigged up the lines for them.

Jim didn't come round to Joy's place any more. Dad reckoned that scholarship he won hadn't done him much good. He had just picked up a lot of weird ideas and was always slinging off at everything. Dad would say, Where's the Red Flag? And Jim couldn't be bothered with Dad, so he didn't come round any more.

But the first Christmas Joy could remember he was there, and gave her a bell that was meant to be put on a tree and soon got broken. What she remembered about that Christmas was the colour of the bell. Auntie Laurel said it was a nile green, but it wasn't at all like a nile green dress Joy had. She never could get it with her paints either, so after the bell was broken she never saw that particular colour again.

They had the socials at the station hall then, and Mum and Dad still went out together sometimes, and the imaginary man came at night to keep away danger. He wore historical clothes and was called Mr. Charles but he looked very like Jim.

And after that nothing much except the picnics. Jim went away to the town and didn't come home very often. He was saving up for a trip to Europe, he said.

The kids didn't want to stop fishing, and Joy had to promise they could come back later on. I'll be seeing you later on, she said to Jim.

With Terry and Mavis dragging behind they walked along past the baches. The baches were mostly empty, and as they hadn't been painted for years, were grayish-white like the sky.

The Dacres were coming. They talked away to each other looking along the ground, not seeing Mum and her friend till they got quite close. Then they

stopped and smiled and were introduced to Miss Jenkins. They said the glass had gone up quite a bit this morning.

When the Dacres were out of sight Miss Jenkins said she *would* like a smoke now, so Mum suggested they climb up the bank and sit under the pines where they would be sheltered from the drizzle and not be seen. Mavis slipped down the bank and dirtied herself but Mum was quite calm about it. She had brought another dress and panties for Mavis to change to for afternoon tea.

You keep them so nice, Miss Jenkins said with a smile.

When they got back to the lorry it was lunchtime. Auntie Laurel was there with the rest of the kids, waiting. She said she hadn't seen Uncle Nick all morning. He's always Hail fellow well met, she explained to Miss Jenkins.

They sat on the grass on coats and macs. Mum took off her hat with the felt feather. Whew, isn't it hot, she said. The sun had come out and it was stifling hot between the cars. Mum unpacked the peanut-butter sandwiches, and the date scones she had baked on the Happywork stove Dad gave her for Christmas. Well we might as well start, she said, as Dad hasn't come. She sent Brian off for the hot water from Mrs. Withers. Then she passed the scones to Miss Jenkins. I baked them before we started this morning, she said.

Miss Jenkins took one. Oh aren't you clever, she said. I must confess I often pop round to the Cosy Cake Shop for scones and things, you know how it is in the city. She didn't look at all ashamed of it though.

They say our baker bakes a fair fruit cake, Mum said, but I prefer my own. You know what's in it.

I suppose you do, said Miss Jenkins.

Dad came and sat down and started fooling with Terry, turning him over and pretending to smack him. Terry didn't know what to make of it but he

laughed till he turned red and hiccoughed. Dad had red patches on his cheeks and his eyes were swimmy.

Brian came back with the teapot. In his other hand he carried the broken off spout wrapped in a handkerchief. Mum couldn't let fly at him with Miss Jenkins there. Dad took it as a joke.

The tea was terribly strong and Miss Jenkins said, Couldn't we borrow some hot water from the hotel? But Mum said, I don't care about asking favours when we don't know them.

You needn't trouble for me, Dad said. He wouldn't have a scone either. He ate one sandwich quickly, then started telling one of his funny stories to Miss Jenkins. He said he know some better ones than that, but he didn't think he could tell them. This made Miss Jenkins laugh but Mum was rather quiet. She was handing round some of the Christmas cake. This year it had white water-icing and dessicated cocoanut, but as Mum said herself it had turned out rather plain. No one took any. Terry was being a bad boy because Dad had been taking notice of him, he was wanting his banana now, but Mum said, No, you know they're for later on. But he howled so loud she had to give him one and then the other kids grabbed bananas too out of Mum's bag, which was bulging with bathing togs and things to change and knitting and Miss Jenkin's *Gone with the Wind,* and other things for later on, and ran off to the shore. Mum called after them not to play in the mud and not to go on the jetty.

Miss Jenkins said she'd had such a lovely lunch and she thought she'd retire to the lorry and have a smoke. Dad offered to go along with her. Only in fun of course.

Pull your skirt down a bit Joy, Mum said. The Reverend Allum was walking over their way. He sat down on the grass beside Joy and smiled all round. He always smiled in a special way as if he were much happier than everyone else. Joy looked away so as

not to be hooked with his smile and be asked something. She'd been in his bad books since she let out that she was reading the Bible verses at night. The verses to be read were marked on the card and if you were regular you could get right through the Bible in five years. Only the morning wasn't really a good time, Mum was tired after having done so much before breakfast, and the kids had to be got off to school. But the verses are your armour for the day, the Reverend Allum had said, You wouldn't put on your armour when you lie down to sleep would you now? Whoever heard of such a thing as that?

Do have some tea, Mum said, it's rather thick I'm afraid.

Thanks but I've had a cup with Mrs. Withers, people are so hospitable. I only wanted to enquire about your little laddie. The one who wasn't at Sunday School last week.

It was only a cold, Mum said, but they hate to miss. It's nice for the kiddies having the Sunday School so near.

Yes and for Mum and Dad too, Joy was thinking, they can have a lie down on Sunday afternoons.

Miss Jenkins came out of the lorry and was introduced. Dad stretched out his legs on the grass till his foot was touching hers, then said, Oh, beg pardon.

Quite a good crowd down here today, Mum said, But the Reverend Allum's smile was for Miss Jenkins.

I expect you must find it pretty quiet, he said.

Oh no, she said, I love a day in the country.

You're right too, the Reverend Allum said. When she was younger Joy had used to think that when the Reverend Allum said You're right too, she'd hit upon something clever. It always turned out though, when he'd enlarged on it, that it wasn't what she had said after all.

The Reverend Allum took a deep breath in and a long look all round him. Yes, he said, on the outgoing breath, when all's said and done nature takes a lot of beating. Jim was walking past, carrying a

bottle with a straw stuck in it. They all looked away and pretended they hadn't noticed but Auntie Laurel said quietly to Mum, Fancy bringing it out here, where everyone's having their lunch.

But the Reverend Allum went on as if nothing had happened. We country-dwellers now, I sometimes think we're apt to forget perhaps. He looked all round him again. His all-embracing glance skipped the hotel and threaded it's way through the cars to the strip of shore. The tide was nearly out. There was only a grey snake of water in the channel, and the steep mud-slopes were steaming off in the sun.

Yes, it's a pity Muriel and Winnie couldn't get down, Mum said. They've been in hospital with their appendixes, she explained to Miss Jenkins. Doctor thought they might as well have them done together and get it over.

Yes. We only see the sunny side of life over here, the Reverend Allum said. It's difficult to imagine what it must be like over there.

Dad had his eyes closed and a dribble of spit on his chin. Joy gave him a quiet agonised poke and he opened his eyes and smiled, looking like Terry. Mum was getting on with her fancy work. Yes. Quite a good crowd here today, she said, but a lot of them have to leave early for the milking.

I don't know what other's opinions may be, said the Reverend Allum, but personally Miss Jenkins, I like to think of this little affair as a sort of commemoration. The settlers in these parts landed here. Quite near where we are sitting now I believe.

There wasn't anything here then, Mum said, her eyes on the hotel.

The settlers had faith, said the Reverend.

Too right, said Miss Jenkins, putting her hand to a yawn.

Dad had found a pair of pink art silk panties that Mavis had had for Christmas. They had been in Mum's bag for Mavis to change to. Dad kept holding them up and squinting between the legs in a comical

way. The Reverend Allum went right on about the settler who had stuck in the mud and they never found the body, but Joy felt hot all over. As if something awful might happen. She got up quietly and walked away to be out of sight of Dad and the lot of them.

She said hello to the Dodds, the Band of Hope Dodds, they always came early and got the best place nearest to the hotel, and went round to the yard. The hotel backed onto the shore and the yard was quiet and secluded, with empty cases to sit on and a nice view over the inlet. Jim was there smoking a cigarette with the cider bottle and the straw beside him.

Hello, she said, what are you doing here?

Oh, nothing, he said.

I thought maybe you had a date.

Who with? he said.

Joy pulled little bits off the straw, wanting to cry. Mum had stuck to it that the navy was just as smart and safer for washing, and the perm she could have next year when she worked at the store. Next year it would all be too late. The other girls had florals, the kind with elastic round the waist that fits almost anyone, and their hair nicely set with steel clips and invisible hairnets. Merle had blossomed out with lipstick too, but really it didn't look so hot with her pimples.

Cheer up, Jim said. How's old stick in the mud?

As usual, Joy said, he's on the settlers again.

And your Dad and the others?

As usual, she said. Dad's had a few of course. You know what he always says, It's a free country.

The curfew shall not wring, but Dad shall turn the wringer tomorrow. He'll have to take his headache to church as well.

Jim was always making fun of Dad and Mum. It wasn't true either, Dad didn't go to church any more. There was only the wringer. It was always like that with Jim. Just as you were settling down for a nice

yarn he would start slinging off at Dad, or his Dad, or the capitalist system, so that it never came to anything. Still, of course, there would never be anyone else.

It was sunny and quiet in the yard. The people walking up and down, up and down, between the hotel and the jetty, stopped and turned back where the metalled path ended. Joy moved along closer to Jim on the box. The people seemed far away. It had to happen then that Murrey popped his head over the fence, grinning at them, showing his black stumps. A horrible boy Murrey, with filthy tricks.

It's only Murrey, Joy said. He'll be having his new teeth when he leaves school, his mother says.

The big thrill that only comes once in a lifetime. Well, my big thrill will be getting out of this. I might get my trip to Europe after all.

More likely land up in the desert though, Joy said. Why couldn't you help your Dad milking and get exempted? You don't want to go and get killed do you?

Get killed for these stick in the muds? But you have to think of the future. A lot of chaps are relieved to get into camp. It's a change from mowing the lawn and all that. It's going to be more of a change than they think though. A change is going on all over the world. Before the war governments had to make camps because the prisons couldn't hold the political prisoners. It's never happened like that before. The bosses are hoping it will blow over, the war will give people something else to do. It was only the old red spectre walking again, they think. But the change that is coming is rising like the tide. It will reach even this little place one day. But I'm going to be on the spot when the big things happen. You have to think of the future.

Joy was looking at the hills across the inlet, not thinking of the future, thinking the hills looked empty and strange today. She had always meant to go over there sometime. It looked lonely, but pretty

and peaceful, the grass a soft green, not the metal green of the properly fertilized paddocks, the hills split softly into creeks full of scrub and shadows. There were Maori lands over there. Better than on our side, Dad said, they are dirty and carry diseases. There wouldn't be much to see over there, he said, but Joy had always wanted to go sometime.

The sun was bright and a cool wind blew from the coast. It was a lovely day now. Cheer up, Jim said. Joy sat still, for fear of disturbing his hand settled on hers, feeling his cool fingers and the heat inside her hand where the straw was crushed.

A man came out of the hotel back door. He was little and sandy, and walked slowly and sadly. He must have lost his way.

He crossed to a box and sat carefully down. Then he remembered something and got up again with a nervous look round the yard. He saw them but it was just too late by then. He took out his false teeth and was sick on the ground.

Joy got up. Jim said he'd have to be getting along too. Outside the yard they ran into the Young Men's Bible Class and the Reverend Allum in bathing togs. They were larking and making funny remarks like a boy's school story. Come along in and have a good swim, they shouted to Jim as they passed, it would do you good.

I'm afraid I haven't been introduced, Miss Jenkins said to Jim when she overtook them, but I've heard such a lot about you. Joy introduced them and she got confidential at once. Rather a queer idea for all the men to go in swimming together Bible Class or no Bible Class, she said. And it was pretty hard to keep up a conversation with some people, and she asked him, had he read, *Gone with the Wind?*

Jim said, Well, yes, but he had to be going himself now. He started up his motor bike with a bang and rode off up the hill, the bike making scornful explosions.

After that there was nothing much to do. It began

to rain again, and Mum sat on a box in the bathing shed with her fancy work, pegging away at the big rose in the middle she had promised herself she was going to finish today. Joy could see there was something wrong but Mum said it was only her legs.

They swelled up, generally in the evening, about the time Dad came home, and she would say to him, Just look at my legs again, it's from being on them all day.

You must have got up too early, Miss Jenkins said.

Oh no, I always get up at five, Mum said. I like to get things done before breakfast.

It's a puzzle what you find to do all the rest of the day, Miss Jenkins said.

I find plenty to do thank you, Mum said, as if she'd been offered something she didn't like.

You must have a gift for it, Miss Jenkins said. And she laughed.

Like some people have a gift for fooling round with men, Mum said. Joy felt as if something horrid was going to happen. But Mum couldn't have meant Miss Jenkins.

The Bible Class was swimming still in the rain, and the other unmarried men must have been in the pub.

When it cleared up it was time to get Mavis changed and line up for the ice cream. Mrs. Dodds, Murrey's mother, and Mrs. Chapman were doing the refreshments this year. Mrs. Dodds always got first prize at the show with her sponge surprise, or else with her ginger kisses. But when Mum tasted the ice cream she said there was nothing in it but those powders, and Auntie Laurel said, Mrs. Dodds and Mrs. Chapman might have put in a bit more sugar and a drop of cream for the kiddies. And only those cheap soft drinks.

The soft drinks were mixed in two kerosene tins. One of the drinks was red and the other green. There was plenty of it and some of the boys got as many as ten drinks. To end off with there was an orange, but

Mum said that was extravagant at the price they were now.

Then Brian was sent to fetch the hot water again, and Mum and Miss Jenkins and Auntie Laurel had afternoon tea with the rest of the Christmas cake. The kids hung round, pestering to go in swimming and Mum kept saying, No you might get in the current. You know you can't go without Dad.

Mrs. Chapman passed with her husband. We're off home, she said.

You've got him well trained, Mum said. That was one of her jokes.

Terry getting sleepy, worrying to be taken notice of, was saying over and over again, Where's Dad?

Now what did you promise me this morning? Mum said. What am I going to tell Dad when he asks if Terry has been a good boy all day?

Daddy's having his tea somewhere, Miss Jenkins said.

But Terry said, I know where he might be. Drinking beer in the hotel.

Mum suddenly gave him such a crack on the side of the head that he couldn't even yell for a minute or two.

The tide's about right in, Joy said. It made noises like smacking kisses under the banks where the kids were sitting looking down at the water. After a while Mum came over and said as the sun was going and Dad hadn't come yet, they could put on their togs. But they musn't stay in for long, it was getting chilly. The boys rushed off to the shed to change. Joy and Mavis undressed in the lorry.

Terry stood on the bank and cried while the others were in. He hadn't been allowed to paddle because of his cold. The sun was off the water now but he cried so long that Mum undressed him and put on his bathing pants, but when he got down to the water he wouldn't go in.

Joy rubbed down Mavis and dressed herself quickly and walked away along the shore as if she were meet-

ing someone. Passing the Withers she saw the dinghy tied to a post by the bach, and got in and let it drift into the mangroves. The wind had died down. It felt like a warm damp hand across her hair. The ugly old twisted mangrove trunks were all covered up and only the branches with dark green leaves were showing. The water made roads between the tops of the trees. Joy moved along the roads and little lanes till a branch scraped the bottom of the boat. Then it was not a road but only all that water underneath, enough to cover a tree.

She began to row out across the inlet. The sun had set and the valleys and creeks on the other side were smoothed out. The hills were black and flat, like the advertisement letters across the picture, painted across the sky for some reason.

When the boat swung in the current she turned. The kids had stopped shouting on the jetty and everything was quiet, and over towards the sea a crack in the sky opened into a still shiny lake, exactly the colour of the Christmas bell.

When Joy got back Brian and Mavis were sitting in the lorry because it was getting chilly, playing I Spy. Terry was asleep on the floor. He had a blue mark down the side of his face. Mum was walking up and down outside. She said Auntie Laurel and Miss Jenkins had gone home hours ago with somebody else.

It was quite dark when Dad came out at last. He said he had had to stay for Uncle Nick who was not feeling too good. Mum wanted to have it out with him but he only smiled. Might as well be the wind blowing, she said. But perhaps you'll be feeling differently tomorrow.

Mr. Chapman, who hadn't gone home after all, sat in front with Dad. Uncle Nick was inside. He was carrying on about his kidneys, how bad they were, they didn't seem to get any better, he was sure he wouldn't pass the medical test, and everyone ought to do their bit, and the loved ones at home. He got

so worked up about it he started to cry.

The kids feeling a bit awkward, piped up *Roll out the Barrel, We'll have a Jolly Good Time,* just to change the subject. I wish it was next year, Brian said, for the picnic.

Joy said nothing. Brian was such a kid. He never stopped to think that everthing might be different next year.

Two Poems

JOHN MALE

DERNA

At nightfall we dropped down Derna Pass
through cypress trees and ghostly white houses
at the roadside. We sat in trucks
by a hall where a jazz band played
(soldiers stamping and applauding)
" Sweet Sue " . . . " The Lights of London " . . . " Last
All Clear " . . .

Wildflowers are a profuse carpet,
but the desert encroaches, menacing the convoy,
dulling the spirit with monotonous vistas.

Impression of feeling and undisciplined squads
of emotion, Mr. Eliot would say. But I would
go back to Derna to reclaim
a prosaic moment of fatigue lightened, heart lifted.
Sweet Sue,
just you . . . .

TAKROUNA

Red flowers (colourful Tunisia)
cutting the fields of barley in rich
swathes; distant from the camping place
the (romantic) mountains; beyond them
the peaks of Atlas.

Ten miles north, jutting angrily
from the plain a rock called Takrouna;
men died there; simple wooden crosses
over some whose first battle it was.

For them the barrage crashing
ahead up on the crag the mortar bombs
the spang of bullets on rock
the selfless intensity of the advance the quick
finish.

They remained there not sharing
the heady exultation for a
local victory;
memory of them will be permanent (we hope)
the story of their exploit remain bright
as a flare, when only one
is shining in the sky.

The Woods no More

R. GILBERD

DISAPPROVING, TWO AXES (one a Plumb Champion, thinned to razor sharpness), a cross-cut saw, a maul, and a slasher, hanging by their handles, frown at the bewildering library and the typewriter on the writing table beside them. For company, they choose the stolid, useful wedges piled on the cupboard beneath them or the thick-set heavy mattock leaning against it. True enough, the brain has its uses. Its co-operation is necessary if a tree is to be swung against the slope, if a leaning tawa is to be restrained from splitting and hurling axe with axeman against the last cut stump. Many a funeral has been held, and many a wild party at the nearest hotel because the man trusted to axe, saw and wedge alone. Only the brain can decide when a butterfly scarf is work wasted, or when a drive can save a week's work and sweep the whole slope to ruin. All that is true. But still the thing can be overdone; it needs to be kept under control. Hard work for the body it wants; days in the sun on contract; sobbing breath on the last spurt to bring the tree down clean; legs stumbling wearily, wearily back along the ridges through the felled scrub; shining naked back rising and falling with the winch handle as the heavy monkey rides slowly up the guides; the sweating relief as the trip-rope jerks and the steel weight plummets; the rough comfort of manuka beds and grey blankets close-drawn against hill country frosts. That's the stuff for it; with the hard coarse fare of an outback camp, cooked after dark and eaten in a flour-sack galley. That must deaden it, keep it in its proper place; unless it dares expose itself to long, wakeful, aching nights; nights when the pen limps and words have to be fought for in restless strides over the crisp frozen grass; when a restless sleeper turns and mutters at the light. Not enough, not enough,

not enough; he escapes us; us, his friends and supporters; you his faithful workday tools, and I, his one-time darling, his little beauty, that makes as light work of tawa as of cabbage tree. Philosophy, politics, poetry; restless ambition; writing, forsooth! Faithless one! We would have given you the muscles of a Dinny Hoe, ears that diagnose the slightest creak of the tight-strained stringers, nerves to stand the narrow insecurity of the jigger-board, senses to predict the fall of the flying bough, skill to swing a tree against its line of fall, to jump it across a fourteen foot road. Cast aside; For what? He doesn't know! He only struggles to the call of shapeless hopes; hopes we would quench and kill; bury in the offal pots, burn in the leaping flames of the manuka, crush in the ear-splitting fury of the drive, drown in the warm friendly smoke of the bar. Will he return? Will he be driven back? We will wait.

They have been my friends, and I am grateful to them. In a man's prime they serve him well; but they are jealous. They struggle too fiercely against any competitor for a man's affections; and their passion burns him out to soon, far to soon for him to taste life in full. Then when he can no longer depart to other loves, gone is their constancy. When he can no longer whirl the axe in shining circles to the music of steel on wood, no longer drive the wedges against the weight of the top-hamper, no longer find the energy for that last dizzying paroxism that brings the tree crashing, unsplit, they abandon him. They leave him to the lonely misery of the station rouseabout or the herded loneliness of the Old Man's Home. Theirs is a faithfuless friendship, as illusory in age as the pleasures of license or the exaltation of alcohol.

Two Poems

DON McDONALD

TIME

Upon the benchy hillside
Where hoggets love to lie,
With noses pointed to the wind
And half closed eye,
I walk alone on Sundays,
And wished my love were nigh.
For oh! the hours went slower
Than the moon goes in the sky.

Upon the benchy hillside
Raked with wind and sun,
Where the grey hawk hovers
And little rabbits run,
My love and I did linger
A few short hours.
But time slipped through our fingers
As the wind slips through the flowers.

BEGINNING AGAIN

Somebody felled the forest,
Somebody fired the burn,
Somebody scattered seed to grow
Somebody in his turn
Watched the slow invasion
Of ragwort and fern.

I cut the fern and ragwort,
I burned the rotting log,
I dug out the ancient roots,
I drained the sodden bog,
And I burned all the rubbish
Where the plough might clog.

Now my team is waiting,
I toss aside my coat,
I tell the team to "get along"
And hiss the starting note,
And deep bite skeith and ploughshare
Into the earth's harsh throat.

First the axe and sawblade,
Won then lost their gain,
Now the skeith and ploughshare
Cut where trees have lain.
Tell me, tell me, Master,
Is their cutting vain?

Or are lads to follow
Where I came and went,
The file of those who struggle
To make the earth relent
The great, the Unsung Army
Who knew what battle meant.

Not with axe and sawblade—
Not with skeith and share—
What shall be the danger
That men must learn to dare.
Show them, Lord, oh show them,
Speak and make them care.

Katherine Mansfield New Zealander

IAN A. GORDON

KATHERINE MANSFIELD is still New Zealand's greatest writer, recognised not merely as a figure in local literature but granted by critics in England and America and Europe a high place among the short story writers of the century. If you turn to books and articles about Katherine Mansfield by overseas writers—and there is quite a critical library growing around her now—you will find she is assessed as an English writer, given her place beside such short story writers as Somerset Maugham or Rudyard Kipling, or possibly given an American or a European context and compared with O. Henry or Tchekov or Guy de Maupassant. And that is right and proper. In this article I am not mainly concerned with Katherine Mansfield's place in English literature of the present century; that has been written of fairly often and it is difficult to say anything very new. What I am concerned with is a theme that has not yet received the attention it deserves, Katherine Mansfield's place in the literature of New Zealand. To deal with it properly you have to be a New Zealander yourself; failing that, at least to know New Zealand with some degree of intimacy. I know from my own experience that it is possible to read Katherine Mansfield with a great deal of enjoyment, to appreciate the beauty of her writing and the sensitivity of her perceptions, without knowing anything of Katherine Mansfield's New Zealand. But I know too that as one's knowledge and appreciation of the country grows, one sees in Katherine Mansfield's work subtleties of character and an evocation of scenery and of atmosphere that could belong only to this country. This article is not so much about Katherine Mansfield the writer as Katherine Mansfield the New Zealander.

New Zealand literature in its first few decades evolved a certain pattern, the pattern of the emigrant turned literary man or woman, at first amateur and later professional. In Katherine Mansfield emerged finally the complete professional, the artist who cares more for her job of creation than for the life of comfortable mediocrity in a provincial town which was offered as an alternative. So far she is a continuation of the pattern. But she breaks from the pattern in that she is no emigrant turned narrator. She is a second generation New Zealander, born in Wellington, daughter of a father who had come to New Zealand at the age of three. Unlike the early New Zealand writers, she had no memories of an English childhood, nor, to use Mr. Holcroft's fine phrase, any memories of a voyage. It is true that she rebelled against New Zealand, rebelled against the narrow round of social activities, arranging the flowers and afternoon-tea calls, that was offered to a young woman of her standing at the beginning of this century. In the early days of New Zealand writing, when all were emigrants, I think a man had a claim to be regarded as a New Zealander if he settled down. Katherine Mansfield never settled down in this country. She fought hard to leave it and having won free at last she never returned.

But in spite of all she was a New Zealander. She could no more escape from her birthplace than from her heredity. When she put pen to paper it framed the words New Zealand. When her mind played round with scenes and characters and incidents for her stories, the scenes and characters and incidents rose unasked from her New Zealand childhood. In the end she realised that she was, as she called herself, "the little colonial" and one of the major ideas revolving in her mind in her final months was the plan for a New Zealand novel. It was never written, but there are sufficient of her short stories, *The Doll's House, At the Bay, The Garden Party, The Aloe, Prelude* and the like, founded on the same material,

to give us an idea of what might have been. The early New Zealand emigrant writers found themselves New Zealanders by staying in the country till they were assimilated. But Katherine Mansfield found herself to be a New Zealander by leaving the country. She did not need to be assimilated. Why should she? She belonged here. Her rebellion against New Zealand was not the resentment of an incomer who dislikes strange new ways, it was just the impatience that members of the same family feel with each other when they live in too close contact. But she belonged to the family just the same.

In one other way Katherine Mansfield broke the pattern for a New Zealand writer which prevailed at her period and which largely prevails to the present day. Most of the early writers from the missionaries downwards had the prevailing nineteenth century social conscience; good was good and evil was evil. The early novels liked to show how the hard-working pioneer became the owner of thousands of acres and the hard-drinking pioneer got just six by three. And this nineteenth century moralising has come down into many of our present day writers and readers. In many circles in New Zealand a writer has no hearing unless he can prove that he has a social conscience and that his work has "social content," and too often, I think, it is demanded of the writer in New Zealand that he should share the New Zealand passion for reforming the world. Katherine Mansfield reformed nothing in her stories. She was interested in human beings as human beings, not in economic and political man. Imagine her story, *The Garden Party,* which is largely a contrast between the happiness of the wealthy family and the tragedy that takes place in a poor home down the near-by lane—imagine this story rewritten by most of the present generation of New Zealand writers and it is difficult to see how they would keep out of the story a certain resentment that one family should be wealthy and the other poor. Not that Katherine Mansfield is not critical. The

callous selfishness of the mother in the story is contrasted with the tender sympathy of Laura, the child-heroine. But Katherine Mansfield's attention is all the time on the people as individuals, not as symbols for a social class.

In her aloofness from outside events, her ability to write of people rather than of movements, Katherine Mansfield is curiously akin to Jane Austen. It has become a commonplace of criticism to say that Jane Austen wrote of her quiet country villages and country families and village love affairs when England was fighting for her life against Napoleon. Not once do the Napoleonic wars come into Jane Austen's books. Once or twice we find a naval officer as a character. But her officers are part of the village society; they have no connection with naval warfare. Has it ever been realised that Katherine Mansfield in the same way lived through the war of 1914-1918, travelled at least twice across the channel with the possibility of disaster, lived for a large part of the war in France, suffering great harships on a wartime railway system, was caught, ill, in Paris just at the moment when the Germans began their long range shelling of the French capital, yet this New Zealand Jane Austen, though she may put much of this into her personal letters and journals, in her stories ignores the war entirely. When her brother arrived in England in 1915 to serve with the forces she met him and talked over their earlier life together. A month later he was killed. Her reaction was not, as it would have been with so many writers, to write a story of wartime bereavement, but to begin on *The Aloe,* which is a very lovely reconstruction of her life as a child among her brothers and sisters in Wellington.

On Katherine Mansfield's biography I need say little. The story is familiar, there is an authorised Life by an American, Miss Ruth Mantz, and Katherine Mansfield's husband, John Middleton Murry, which is easily available. On her early life in Karori and later as an adolescent in Tinakori Road and in

Fitzherbert Terrace, her schooldays at the Karori school and in the private school to which she was later transferred, there are many in Wellington itself who from personal knowledge are better qualified to write than I am. For a brief biography and appreciation, perhaps there is nothing better than the short article in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Personally I find the official biography spoiled by two things, the somewhat lush romanticism of Miss Mantz, and in the introduction and final chapter the odd mysticism of Middleton Murry. He makes a great display of phrases like "the Self", and "Self-annihilation," and "the Everlasting Gospel" and "Inward and spiritual grace," and "condition of crystal clarity," and "mystical vision" and in the end Katherine Mansfield gets all tangled up in his mind with William Blake and John Keats and Jesus of Nazareth. This is all nonsense. Katherine Mansfield, as we know from her life and her Letters and her Journals and her stories, was a woman of flesh and blood, not what she would appear from Murry's chapter, a sort of cross between a spiritualist and an adherent to one of these strange religions that hang on to the fringes of christianity. Katherine Mansfield, in spite of her biographers, was a very real person, and a very real artist.

That must be my final point for this article. Katherine Mansfield was an artist. We have not had too many of them so far in New Zealand and we ought to be grateful for those we have had, and be quietly on the look-out for her successors. She could do more in one sentence than most writers could do in a couple of pages of laboured description. Here, for example, is one of her masterpieces. In her story, *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*, there are four characters, two old maids, the daughters, stingy and saving in their ways, Nurse Andrews effusive and greedy, and finally the maid, Kate. Kate makes her first entry in one sentence, but what a sentence! The three older women have been scrapping round the dinner table, the two old maids annoyed at the conversation of

Nurse Andrews, who has been telling them nicely how much more butter she had in her last place . . .

" 'Ring, Con," cried Josephine. She couldn't trust herself to reply. *And proud young Kate, the enchanted princess, came in to see what the old tabbies wanted now.'* "

In that brief sentence we are transported from the backbiting round the dinner table to the mind of the young girl who is so contemptuous and impatient of the whole scene. All in one sentence . . . imagine what some of our writers would have done with that scene, how they would have analysed the mind of the young girl, and given you a bit of her history, and then related some squabble she had with her two mistresses . . . and so on. Katherine Mansfield wastes no time and she wastes no words, the sure sign of the literary artiste.

Katherine Mansfield is, I hope, a familiar topic and I have no need to illustrate further. Whether she is handling the melodrama of a story like *The Woman at the Store* or the lovely recreations of childhood and of adolescence like *Her First Ball* or *The Doll's House* or *The Voyage* with its Picton crossing or her equally sensitive insight into adult life with her feeling for the interaction of personality—stories like *A Married Man's Story* or *The Life of Ma Parker* or *The Fly*—you have the sensation of living with living people, not just hearing about them, but really entering into their lives and their actions. That again, the ability to present human beings as human beings, is one of the hallmarks of the artist.

And throughout all her work, the atmosphere of her own country, conveyed with skill and subtlety. She has no need to give laboured descriptions of bush or Wellington streets and winds. But read her stories and the atmosphere is there. A phrase, a half sentence . . . and the New Zealand reader can say, with some real satisfaction, that only a New Zealander could have written that way. Katherine Mansfield belongs to England and to Europe. But in a very real sense she belongs to New Zealand.

Three Poems

G. R. GILBERT

THE TIME HAS PASSED

The time has passed that was for the pretty pictures
and beautiful words,
The clock has struck and our art must be traced into
action,
The beauty is now the beauty of movement,
No longer meditation but the seizing of power.

Gone is the time for the dark incomprehensible
saying,
The pleasant personal touch,
The lines to a friend.
Now the words should be hard and the meaning
plain.

Our dainty novels of condescension, the kinship with
the proletariat,
Forget them—concentrate on the fight.
Life has us now, not art;
Hand bred to brush and pen must grip iron,
Our eyes filled with blood,
Press on.
We cannot go back.

KILLED IN ACTION

Stoop steel sing lead
The silent flood serves plaster saints
Steel needle's severed nerve end
Sags
The needle machine stops

The red flower sprouts, petals, fades
Sings in the water to mud

Calyx blackened leaf betrayed
Goes sap and stalk

Shouts no more.

THE LEADER MAKES PLANS

Taking in the principal cities of the world at a glance
The Leader made plans:
At 10 a.m. we occupy London and Liverpool,
And at eleven, he said, we take Paris and Berlin and
Rome and Budapest.
After lunch we invade the Americas,
Taking New York and Boston and Rio de Janerio.
In the afternoon New Zealand, Australia etc.
On Tuesday at half past two I will be made Master
of the World.

And the background of voices cried:
What can you do then? What can you do?
A helluva fine time merely signing letters.

Enemy Aircraft Overhead

MARION HOPE

Who are these coming to the sacrifice,
To what green altar, oh mysterious Priest,
In not quite seemly haste?
These caught commemorative eyes.
Where have they stood,
To hear the exquisite knocking of the blood
Frozen beyond the texture of surprise?
And do we seem
Below their ineluctable skies
Etched in the simulacrum of a dream?

Stalingrad, 1943

RONALD L. MEEK

Death is not single here, and his bayonet tears
The roots of other cities, other worlds.
You see that prisoner, waiting to be shot,
A little puzzled, looking at his hands?
You say you think you know him? Look again.
Yes. It is you, my friend.

Death comes ungently here, and his boss is rich
In minted knowledge of the ways of steel.
Master and servant thunderously announce
The triumph of their method: brick from brick
And rail from rafter delicately torn.
But can they build, my friend?

Death is accuser here, and the frost-furred bone;
Eyes can corrode; the tender touch will wither.
It's easy now it's over, isn't it,
Swiftly to reassemble stone on stone,
To calculate tomorrow with a song?
They sing for you, my friend.

The Contributors

ALAN FALCONER before the war was a compositor in Wellington. Now with the R.N.Z.A.F. overseas.

WALLACE GAITLAND is in the public service in Invercargill. He has completed a novel *Zig-Zag*, from which a chapter is here printed.

R. GILBERD was born in Kaeo, North Auckland. After an adult life of scrub-cutting, farming, public works, bush-felling, he is now a slaughterman in the freezing works at Gisborne and represents his Union on the local Trades Council.

G. R. GILBERT before the war worked in several broadcasting stations. He is now with the R.N.Z.A.F. overseas. He has published one volume of short stories from the Caxton Press, and poetry in several periodicals.

IAN A. GORDON is Professor of English in Wellington. Published prose and poetry here and in England and America. The essay printed in this issue is from a forthcoming volume of essays on New Zealand literature.

JAMES HARRIS was born in Wales. He has been in New Zealand for some years and has made films for the New Zealand National Film Unit since its inception, "Camera work, direction, editing, writing, and took up story writing again as a cure."

MARION HOPE is a graduate of Canterbury University College with honours in English. She teaches in a South Island Boys' School.

DON McDONALD was an old pupil of Feilding Agricultural High School who took up back-country farming. He served with the Second N.Z.E.F. in the Middle East, was wounded and later drowned when the hospital ship on which he was travelling was torpedoed. His poems are being published as part of the school War Memorial.

JOHN (GIFFORD) MALE was a journalist before the war. He is now a gunner with the forces in Italy.

RONALD L. MEEK, a law graduate of Victoria University College, is in the public service in Wellington. He has published poetry and prose in several periodicals in New Zealand.

ERIC OLAF PETERSEN was born at Karamea, grandson of one of the early Danish whalers. He is head gardener on the staff of a mental hospital. The sketch here printed is his "first serious effort," though he has written for many years on gardening and bee-keeping.

P. W. ROBERTSON is Professor of Chemistry at Victoria University College. Interested in chemical kinetics, also theories of aesthetic. Written *A Soul's Progress* (1920), *Life and Beauty* (1931), *Art and Psychoanalysis* (unpublished).

FRANK SARGESON was born in Hamilton and qualified as a solicitor. During the slump "more continuously in contact with the social nondescripts and misfits for whose company I always had a strong predilection." Strongly "influenced by Sherwood Anderson." His most recent novel, *That Summer,* is appearing in the English *New Writing. A Man and his Wife* has been, for the New Zealand market, a best seller.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN is serving with the R.N.Z.A.F.

GREVILLE TEXIDOR was born in Wolverhampton, lived in America, France and Spain, where she worked for the Republican Government during the Civil War. She came to New Zealand in 1940 and lives north of Auckland.

ANTON VOGT was born in Norway but has been in New Zealand for most of his life. He teaches in the District High School at Reefton. Author of two volumes of poetry, the most recent being *Poems for a War,* he has completed a play, *The Island,* which will appear shortly in print and on the stage.

M. T. WOOLASTON is an orchard worker in the Nelson district. Has written poetry but claims that painting is his true vocation. His use of native earths for pigment and his treatment of landscape, especially hill-country, is something unique in New Zealand art.

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